

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1416

INFO USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: WB, GW, ETRN

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: MODERN AIR TRANSPORTS (MAT)

DISCONTINUES BERLIN/SAARBRUECKEN SCHEDULED SERVICE

REF: BONN 3161

1. MAT GENERAL MANAGER MCGLON CONFIRMED YESTERDAY THAT SAARLAND GOVERNMENT WOULD BE UNABLE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LEAVING THE AIRLINE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO DISCONTINUE ITS NON-STOP BERLIN/ SAARBRUECKEN SERVICE. MCGLON ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT BECAUSE OF RELATIVELY HEAVY ADVANCE BOOKINGS FOR THE EASTER HOLIDAY, MAT (WITH THE AUTHORIZATION OF ITS MIAMI HEADQUARTERS) HAD DECIDED TO CARRY ON WITH ITS SERVICE THROUGH APRIL 16. DESPITE THE ADDITIONAL LOSSES INVOLVED MAT BELIEVED IT WOULD BE A WORTHWHILE GOOD-WILL GESTURE TO AVOID STRANDING HOLIDAY TRAVELERS WHO MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO GET SPACE ON OTHER AIRLINES AT THIS LATE DATE.

2. BRITISH AND FRENCH CAAS CONCURRED IN MAT PROPOSAL AND WE AUTHORIZE CONTINUATION OF THE SERVICE THROUGH APRIL 16. FONOFF OFFICIAL KRONECK
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TOLD US HE WAS, IN FACT, RELIEVED THAT THE SERVICE

WOULD NOT BE TERMINATED AS ABRUPTLY AS APRIL 1 AND NOTED THAT ADDITIONAL TWO WEEKS WOULD GIVE FONOFF TIME TO EXPLORE WHETHER THE FRG WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER SOME ASSISTANCE FOR THE SAARBRUECKEN SERVICE (HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY). IN ANY CASE, HE THOUGHT, MAT'S DECISION TO CONTINUE THROUGH APRIL 16 WOULD BE HELPFUL IN ASSUAGING SAARBRUECKEN OFFICIALS' DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE LOSS OF A NON-STOP SERVICE TO BERLIN.

3. MCGLON CALLED AFTER THE ABOVE WAS DRAFTED TO REPORT THAT A BERLIN SENATE OFFICIAL HAD SUGGESTED MAT APPLY FOR AN INDEFINITE SUSPENSION OF SERVICE RATHER THAN A TERMINATION THEREBY RESERVING RIGHTS TO RE-COMMENCE THE SERVICE SHOULD CONDITIONS CHANGE. HE ADDED THE SENATE OFFICIAL HAD IN MIND THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT BE MORE FAVORABLE IF THE ENTIRE IGS WAS OPERATING OUT OF TEGEL. MCGLON SAID, HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE MERELY A COSMETIC EXERCISE SINCE HE DOUBTED MAT WOULD WANT TO GET BACK INTO THE SAARBRUECKEN SERVICE. GIVEN THIS FACT PLUS THE RISK OF GIVING THE PUBLIC AND GERMAN OFFICIALS A MISLEADING IMPRESSION -- CAA CONCURRENCE IN RE-INSTATING THE SERVICE (IF OBTAINABLE AT ALL) WOULD REQUIRE A CAREFUL REEXAMINATION -- WE SUGGESTED MAT SIMPLY APPLY TO DISCONTINUE THE SERVICE EFFECTIVE APRIL 17. HILLENBRAND

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